

May 22, 2008



TRANSCRIPT
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MONTGOMERY COUNTY COUNCIL

PRESENT

Councilmember Michael Knapp, President
Councilmember Roger Berliner
Councilmember Valerie Ervin
Councilmember George Leventhal

Councilmember Phil Andrews, Vice-President
Councilmember Marc Elrich
Councilmember Nancy Floreen
Councilmember Duchy Trachtenberg



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1 Council President Knapp,

2 Okay. Good morning everyone. We are all here. Welcome back for final Action on the
3 FY09 Capital Budget, FY09-14 Capital Improvements Program and the various
4 Resolutions for the FY09 Operating Budget. I'll be very brief in my remarks this morning.
5 We've all had lots of chances to talk amongst ourselves and with all of you. And so I
6 thank you, I sort of, I guess I wanted to begin first by thanking all of you for your efforts.
7 Those of you who are in the room and many folks of the organizations who are with you
8 who are not in the room all contributed a great deal to this year's budget. It was not an
9 easy task this year, as is often the case in difficult economic times, and so I appreciate
10 all of the efforts of everyone trying to find savings, look at programmatic results, look at
11 various elements to make sure that we have full information to make the best decision
12 that we possibly can and I thank you all very much for that. I see Jennifer Barrett and
13 Joe Beach in the front row and I just want to thank them for their efforts. We had an
14 opportunity over the last couple of days to, Councilmember Trachtenberg and I, to travel
15 with them and the County Executive to New York to visit our bond rating agencies and it
16 was a, I will call it a pretty successful trip. I see her head nodding up and down. That's
17 good. No, it was very worthwhile and clearly there is a lot of respect for that efforts that
18 Montgomery County has taken in the past and the policies and procedures that we have
19 in place and I think that was very helpful, but I think they were appreciative of the efforts
20 that this Council and the Executive took on this year's budget in difficult economic times
21 and we'll see when we get it in writing, but at least the conversation was a pretty
22 positive conversation as to how we're continuing to proceed on a very good pace and a
23 very good process. I want to thank our residents. It was a difficult year. And we heard
24 from many of them, and I think that is very important in a difficult year, especially when
25 we're looking at tax increases. We need to understand how to use the resources that
26 they provide us well and wisely and I think many, many of them let us know how they
27 thought and what they thought and I think this budget we put together this year strikes a
28 balance between fiscal prudence and also trying to maintain those core services that
29 are so important to our residents and I think we've done that. I would also very much
30 like to thank my colleagues for their efforts. This was a good and worthwhile discussion,
31 a deliberative body out of necessity deliberates, and I think that we did. And there has
32 been much written about that, but I think more importantly what happened was we
33 talked and we came to consensus and to conclusions and I think that our County will be
34 better off as a result of it. I would also personally like to thank my staff, Joyce Fuhrman,
35 Brian Jones, Danielle Moya, Carmen Barrios, and Nancy Aldus for their efforts. They
36 kept me sane during this process, which was not an easy task much of the time, so I
37 appreciate all that they did as well. With that, I would say that we could actually move to
38 the number of Resolutions we have before us. What I was going to propose to my
39 colleagues is if you look at the agenda you have before you, we have three large groups
40 of Actions. I think we can take action on each of those as we proceed and then we'll
41 take specific action on the various tax measures. So what I wanted to do was to move
42 to that, see if Councilmembers have any short comments that they may want to make.
43 Before I do that though, one piece I also would like to clarify further, one of the pieces
44 that was out there that came down to the very end and it's something we're going to



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1 continue to work very closely with both MCPS and County Government on, is the
2 additional employee personnel savings. I don't think any of us expect that there's going
3 to be a plan for how to get that done in the next week. I think that's going to be
4 something that's going to be ongoing both through this year and this year's budget, but
5 more importantly as we proceed forward in the coming years. And so I think our goal is
6 to work with both MCPS, the Board of Education, and Montgomery County Government
7 to come up with ideas, plans, actions which are both sustainable but that also more
8 importantly increase efficiencies and have a minimal impact on our programs that are
9 out there that we think are so important and effective. And I think that's going to be
10 something that we all recognize the need to continue to have that dialogue around and
11 don't expect that that's going to be a simple task. So with that, I will turn to, I guess
12 Councilmember Berliner has some comments.

13
14 Councilmember Berliner,
15 If this is the appropriate time for comments Council President.

16
17 Council President Knapp,
18 Sure.

19
20 Councilmember Berliner,
21 I have a short statement that I'd like to share. This is not a budget to celebrate, even as
22 it funds a lot of good things for a lot of people. There's little satisfaction in a budget that
23 raises property taxes an average of 13% when our taxpayers are already over
24 burdened, our economy is weak, and gas costs \$4 a gallon. We have spent less and
25 taxed less than the budget proposed by the County Executive and that is a good thing.
26 Given the \$300 million deficit we faced, raising taxes was clearly required. We could not
27 slash government services by that amount without doing great harm, unacceptable
28 harm. But the other consequences of raising property taxes is that this budget needed
29 seven votes. A seven vote budget requires a lot of compromise. This is not my ideal
30 budget, nor do I suspect any of my colleagues perceive it an ideal budget from their
31 perspective. I, for one, had hoped that our budget would embrace a greater sense of
32 shared sacrifice, but the only hope we had of obtaining that result was if all parties were
33 prepared to participate, and clearly that was not the case. And as our discussions here
34 on this Council made clear, that was not a goal that all members of this Council shared,
35 which makes getting to seven votes very difficult. So this budget is a product of bad
36 economic times and required compromises which doesn't make for an optimal result,
37 just a necessary one. Thank you.

38
39 Council President Knapp,
40 Thank you very much. I see no further comments. We have before us our first set of
41 Actions, we have Approval Resolutions for the FY09 Capital Budget and for the FY09-
42 14 Capital Improvements Program and what I'll do, they are listed one through nine, but
43 we can take this as a single action. One is County Government, two is Montgomery
44 County Public Schools, three is Montgomery College, four Maryland-National Capital



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1 Park and Planning Commission, fifth is the Revenue Authority, number six is Housing
2 Opportunities Commission, seven is the Aggregate Capital Budget for County General
3 Obligation Bonds Spending Affordability Guidelines, eight is the Aggregate Capital
4 Budget for Park and Planning Bonds Spending Affordability Guidelines, and nine is the
5 FY09 State Participation. I would ask for a motion.

6
7 Councilmember Trachtenberg,
8 So moved.

9
10 Councilmember Berliner,
11 So moved.

12
13 Council President Knapp,
14 Moved by Councilmember Trachtenberg, seconded by Councilmember Berliner. All in
15 support of our Action on Approval of Resolutions for FY09 Capital Budget and for the
16 FY09-14 Capital Improvements Program indicate by raising your hand. That is
17 unanimous, thank you very much. We now turn to Action on Approval of Resolutions for
18 FY09 Operating Budget number 10 County Government, number 11 Montgomery
19 County Public Schools, number 12 Montgomery College, number 13 Maryland-National
20 Capital Park and Planning Commission, number 14 Administrative Expense Budget for
21 the Washington Suburban Transit Commission, and number 15 Aggregate Operating
22 Budget Spending Affordability Guidelines. Is there a motion?

23
24 Councilmember Floreen,
25 So moved.

26
27 Councilmember Ervin,
28 Second.

29
30 Council President Knapp,
31 Moved by Councilmember Floreen, seconded by Councilmember Ervin. Is there any
32 discussion? Seeing none, all in support, please indicate by raising your hand. That is
33 unanimous. Thank you very much. We now turn to Action on Resolutions to Approve,
34 number 16 WSSC - FY09-14 Capital Improvements Program, number 17 WSSC - FY09
35 Capital and Operating Budgets, and number 18 the Cable Television Communications
36 Plan. Is there a motion?

37
38 Councilmember Leventhal,
39 So moved.

40
41 Councilmember Ervin,
42 Move approval.

43
44 Council President Knapp,



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1 Moved by Councilmember Leventhal, seconded by Councilmember Ervin. Seeing no
2 discussion, all in support please indicate by raising your hand. That is also unanimous.
3 Thank you very much. And we'll now take specific Actions on the various tax elements.
4 Action on 18.1 Resolution to set amount of Property Tax Credit for the Income Tax
5 Offset. Is there a motion?

6
7 Councilmember Floreen,
8 So moved.

9
10 Council President Knapp,
11 Moved by Councilmember Floreen.

12
13 Councilmember Trachtenberg,
14 Second.

15
16 Council President Knapp,
17 Seconded by Councilmember Trachtenberg. Is there discussion? Seeing none, all in
18 support indicate by raising your hand. That is unanimous, thank you very much. Number
19 19, Resolution to establish the FY09 Property Tax Rates. Is there a motion?

20
21 Councilmember Floreen,
22 So moved.

23
24 Councilmember Ervin,
25 Second.

26
27 Council President Knapp,
28 Moved by Councilmember Floreen, seconded by Councilmember Ervin. Is there a
29 discussion? Seeing none, all in support indicate by raising your hand. That is
30 unanimous. Thank you very much. Number 20, Resolution to authorize the substitution
31 of Current Revenue for General Obligation Bonds in FY09. Is there a motion?

32
33 Councilmember Trachtenberg,
34 So moved.

35
36 Councilmember Ervin,
37 Move approval.

38
39 Council President Knapp,
40 Moved by Councilmember Trachtenberg, seconded by Councilmember Ervin. Is there
41 discussion? Seeing none, all in support indicate by raising your hand. That is
42 unanimous. Thank you very much. That concludes our Action on the various budgets.
43 We now turn to our Consent Calendar. Is there a motion for the Consent Calendar?



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1 Councilmember Berliner,
2 So moved.

3
4 Council President Knapp,
5 Moved by Councilmember Berliner, seconded by Councilmember Elrich. Any discussion
6 on the Consent Calendar. Seeing none, all in support of the Consent Calendar please
7 indicate by raising your hand. That is unanimous. Thank you. And we now turn to
8 Legislative Session day number 17. We have a series of Bills for Introduction. First Bill
9 16-08, Special Capital Improvements Project, bless you, - Montrose Parkway East,
10 sponsored by the Council President at the request of the County Executive. Public
11 hearing and action is scheduled for June 10th 1:45 p.m. We have Bill 17-08, Special
12 Capital Improvements Project - Nebel Street Extended, sponsored by the Council
13 President at the request of the County Executive. Public hearing and action is
14 scheduled for June 10th at 1:45 P.M. Bill 18-08, Special Capital Improvements Project -
15 Woodfield Road Extended, sponsored by the Council President at the request of the
16 County Executive. Public hearing and action is also scheduled for June 10th. Bill 19-08,
17 Special Capital Improvements Project - Bethesda Metro Station South Entrance,
18 sponsored by the Council President at the request of the County Executive. Public
19 hearing is also scheduled for June 10th. And finally, excuse me, Bill 20-08, Special
20 Capital Improvements Project - Bethesda Lot 31 Parking Garage, sponsored by the
21 Council President at the request of the County Executive. Public hearing and action is
22 also scheduled for June 10th at 1:45. And we have one issue Call of Bills for final
23 reading, Expedited Bill 14- 08, Forest Conservation Advisory Committee - Composition.
24 Madam Clerk, if you would call the roll.

25
26 Council Clerk,
27 Mr. Elrich.

28
29 Councilmember Elrich,
30 Yes.

31
32 Council Clerk,
33 Ms. Floreen.

34
35 Councilmember Floreen,
36 Yes.

37
38 Council Clerk,
39 Ms. Trachtenberg.

40
41 Councilmember Trachtenberg,
42 Yes.

43
44 Council Clerk,



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1 Mr. Leventhal.
2
3 Councilmember Leventhal,
4 Yes.
5
6 Council Clerk,
7 Ms. Ervin.
8
9 Councilmember Ervin,
10 Yes.
11
12 Council Clerk,
13 Mr. Berliner.
14
15 Councilmember Berliner,
16 Yes.
17
18 Council Clerk,
19 Mr. Andrews.
20
21 Councilmember Andrews,
22 Yes.
23
24 Council Clerk,
25 And Mr. Knapp.
26
27 Council President Knapp,
28 Yes. That passes unanimously. Seeing no further comments, there are no issues before
29 the Council today. We are adjourned until June 10th. Thank you very much.
30